

*Rivers represent constant rebirth.
The waters flow in, forever new, yet forever the same;
they complete a journey from beginning to end,
and then they embark on the journey again.
-Tim Palmer*



The New Rhythm of the River

JOHN H CHAFEE BLACKSTONE RIVER VALLEY NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR



2002 ANNUAL REPORT



CORRIDOR COMMISSION

Executive Sub-Committee:

Chairman – Richard T. Moore, State Senator, MA
Vice-Chairman – Burton Stallwood,
United States Federal Marshall, RI
Secretary – Mary K. Connor, Chair,
Strategic Planning Sub-committee, MA
Treasurer – Kenneth Bianchi,
Executive Director RI Turnpike & Bridge Authority, RI

National Park Service

Marie Rust,
Regional Director, NPS Northeast Region

Commissioners

Massachusetts:

Peter Abair, Director,
MA Department of Economic Development
Matthew Amorello, Chairman,
Massachusetts Turnpike Authority
Paul Clancy, City of Worcester, District Three Councilor
Cara Metz, Executive Director,
Massachusetts Historical Commission
Louise M. Redding, Certified Public Accountant,
Co-Chair Blackstone Valley Institute Sub-Committee
Peter C. Webber, Commissioner,
MA Department of Environmental Management
Donna Williams, Conservation Advocacy Coordinator,
Massachusetts Audubon Society,
Chair, American Heritage Rivers Sub-Committee

Rhode Island:

William Ankner, Director,
RI Department of Transportation
Robert Billington, President,
Blackstone Valley Tourism Council
Michael Cassidy, Director of Planning and
Redevelopment, City of Pawtucket
Patricia Mehrtens, Historian, Burrillville, RI
Jan Reitsma, Director, RI Department of Environmental
Management. Co-Chair Blackstone Valley Institute
Sub-Committee
Edward Sanderson, Executive Director,
RI Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission
Bill Parsons, Director,
RI Economic Development Council

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE STAFF

Michael Creasey, Executive Director

Planning and Project Management

Halford Welch, Director
Diane Wendland,
Landscape Architect and Riverways Coordinator
Nancy Brittain, Community and
Landscape Preservation Coordinator
Juliet Walker, Project Manager,
Blackstone Valley Institute
Mark Jewell, Outdoor Recreation Planner
Lorraine Provencher, Planning Assistant
Barbara Dixon, Visitor Information,
Special Events and Tourism

Interpretation & Ranger Services

Sue Andrews, Chief of Interpretation
Jack Whittaker, Park Ranger
Kevin Klyberg, Park Ranger
Raymond Boswell, Park Ranger
Peter Coffin, Park Ranger
Chuck Arning, Park Ranger & Television Producer
Suzanne Buchanan,
Park Ranger and Volunteer Coordinator
Karen Mateleska,
Biologist and Environmental Educator
Dan Meharg, Park Ranger and Environmental Educator

Administration

Elizabeth McConnell, Chief of Administration
Diane Angell, Budget Analyst
Linda McWhorter, Executive Secretary
Tamara Rogers, Receptionist

Roger Williams National Memorial

Sue Andrews, Site Manager
John McNiff, Park Ranger
Sparkle Bryant, Park Ranger
Laura Samit, Park Ranger
Maria Levesque, Park Ranger
Paul Coletta, Maintenance Worker
Meregildo Raul Medina, Maintenance Worker

*"The nation behaves well if it treats its natural resources
as assets which it must turn over to the next generation
increased and not impaired in value."
~Theodore Roosevelt*

REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN: 2002

In the past fifteen years, literally hundreds of individuals, organizations and agencies have devoted time, energy and resources to recognize and sustain the Blackstone Valley's place in history as the "Birthplace of America's Industrial Revolution." Our collective role has been to unveil the abundant history and natural beauty that exist from the headwaters in Worcester to Providence and Narragansett Bay.

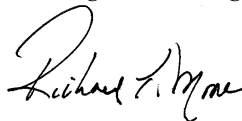
The sentiments expressed above by America's greatest environmental president convey, in large measure, the theme of the Corridor Commission during the past year. Through an intense strategic planning process, the Commissioners and staff, along with focus groups of stakeholders, have begun to prepare to turn the Valley over to the next generation.

We have launched an exciting web site for the Corridor, challenged residents of the region to test their stamina and skills by biking, running, and canoeing along the Blackstone, and attracted the interest of talented volunteers from school children to senior citizens.

The task for the Corridor Commission is to develop its legacy as our country faces significant economic challenges. It is also a time when booming development growth threatens some of the Valley's most precious assets.

We have much to do in the years ahead. Our major "flagships"– Slater Mill, the Museum of Work and Culture, River Bend Farm, and the evolving Northern Gateway, need a plan to sustain their development, link them with each other and to other local historic and environmental treasures, and to ensure their perpetual care. We must complete the Blackstone Valley Bikeway, restore segments of the historic Blackstone Canal and improve the health of our waterways.

We are, indeed, grateful for the professionalism and dedication of our National Park Service staff. We are appreciative of the legislative leadership provided by the Corridor's Congressional delegations from Massachusetts and Rhode Island who have offered enthusiastic, bi-partisan support with dramatic results. We are also blessed with the enthusiasm and commitment of hundreds of volunteers, including the Commissioners, who are essential to achieving Theodore Roosevelt's vision of a well-behaved nation. Our Valley's family of organizational and community partnerships is our greatest strength and gives us all reason to believe that our mission can, and must, succeed!



Senator Richard T. Moore, Chairman

A SALUTE TO RHODE ISLAND'S GOVERNOR LINCOLN ALMOND

The Commission recognizes the exemplary leadership that Governor Almond demonstrated during his eight years in office. As a Blackstone Valley native who grew up along the Blackstone River in Central Falls and later in Lincoln, Governor Almond embraced the principles of the National Heritage Corridor and brought focus and funding to key projects. State and federal funds were directed to build the Blackstone Bikeway, secure thousands of acres of open space, and stimulate economic growth in the region. His legacy will be felt for years to come as our children grow to understand the history of the Blackstone, as people pass by our preserved farmlands, or take a stroll along the Blackstone Riverway.

~Thank you, Governor Almond.



Inroads & Tributaries

"A SINGLE DEDICATED PERSON OR GROUP OF DEDICATED INDIVIDUALS, WITH A WELL CRAFTED VISION AND STRONG DESIRE TO GET INVOLVED AND SEE THAT VISION REALIZED, CAN EFFECT REAL AND MEANINGFUL CHANGE IN THE VALLEY."

MARY ANDERSON, HERITAGE DESIGN GROUP, 2002 LEADERSHIP BLACKSTONE VALLEY GRADUATE

BLACKSTONE VALLEY INSTITUTE

Through leadership development, education and training, and planning assistance, the Institute promotes information sharing with the goal of preserving the unique history and character of the Blackstone Valley's landscapes.

Assistance included a community forum on economic development planning for downtown Whitinsville, a planning board retreat for North Smithfield, and a series of roundtable discussions with Blackstone Valley planners. Partnering with Grow Smart RI, Commission funds helped launch the first in a series of training programs for over fifty Blackstone Valley municipal officials. The Institute recently launched a new website: www.nps.gov/blac/institute that includes case studies, a reference library and opportunities for training and learning.



The Institute provided scholarships to local leaders to attend conferences on downtown revitalization, stormwater management and community planning.

GROWING LEADERS IN THE VALLEY

A year ago, the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce Education Foundation teamed up with the Northern Rhode Island Chamber and Corridor Commission to develop a program that would "cultivate a network of leaders to serve as stewards of the Blackstone River Valley communities." Leadership Blackstone Valley has since graduated two classes and 34 people. This program emerged out of an interest to support leadership development for people who want to serve their communities. Eighty percent of the graduates have since assumed leadership roles within their communities and

organizations. An "alumni network" recruits additional candidates and discusses issues facing the bi-state region.

BLACKSTONE RIVER CONSERVATION ALLIANCE

Two years after Expedition 2000 where participants explored the entire stretch of the Blackstone River, fifty conservation organizations and agencies from Massachusetts and Rhode Island were united under the umbrella of the Blackstone River Conservation Alliance. Organized by the Metacomet Land Trust, workshops explored crucial habitat and landscape conservation opportunities throughout the Blackstone River watershed. Additional meetings will be held throughout 2003.

REINVENTING THE MILL

An exciting transition is taking place at the Slater Mill Historic Site in Pawtucket. The Old Slater Mill Assoc. recently completed a strategic plan which includes some

major changes in the operations and will offer a Living History experience.

New programs will portray the impact of this area's history on the lives of people today. Visitors will be placed in a setting reflecting the 1830's with living history demonstrations showing how people worked in the mills and at home as America began to shift from an agricultural landscape to an industrial society.

Across the street at the Blackstone Visitor Center there is also a new look. The Slater Gallery hosted seven exhibits in 2002, including a special show from



Belper, England entitled, "Threads Across the Atlantic," an exhibit on the connections between America and England during the Industrial Revolution. The Slater Mill Store now sells unique gifts made by local artisans and a café where people can relax next to the gallery with a cup of coffee and good food.

Riverbanks

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LEICESTER



“BY OPENING UP OUR WATERWAYS, WE BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND WHERE THE WATER GOES AND WHAT OUR POSITION IS TO THE SEA. THERE IS THIS WHOLE PART OF WORCESTER THAT HAS BEEN COVERED OVER AND EXPOSING IT TO DAYLIGHT AND FRESH AIR BENEFITS THE CITY IN HUNDREDS OF DIFFERENT WAYS.”

ALLEN FLETCHER, CHAIR,
WORCESTER CANAL TASK FORCE

THERE'S A CANAL UNDERFOOT

The Blackstone Canal, the engineering feat that connected Worcester to the sea and helped create the “City of Innovation and Enterprise,” was covered over in the late 19th century. People now want to bring it back to light as a means to create a new front door to the City of Worcester. The Blackstone Canal Task Force, formed to oversee a major study, will investigate the feasibility of restoring segments of the canal and its interpretation. The plan lays out some intriguing possibilities for potential investment that include the restoration of a waterway flanked by restaurants, shops and housing. This is an ambitious plan that will continue to evolve and bring more and more people into the vision.

NEW DESIGN FOR HISTORIC DOUGLAS

Today the mills are quiet in this Massachusetts village center, but the traffic through town continues to grow along one of the primary east/west connectors in the Valley. With design assistance, the Town created plans to address traffic pressures and safety issues while maintaining a village atmosphere. The Mumford River, with its important relationship to town byways, provided the opportunity to plan a riverfront park that would serve as both a nature walk and a pedestrian



link to the downtown and Soldier's Field recreation area. Industrial history and river environment will be featured along the walk; these plans make the Town eligible to compete for state and federal construction funds.



CHESTNUT HILL MEETING HOUSE

The structural integrity of this 1769 meeting house is assured with the completion of extensive rehabilitation work spanning more than a decade. Recent work included repair to wood sills, framing and plaster, and preservation of wood surfaces. The stewards of this exceptional property, members of the Chestnut Street Meeting House & Cemetery Association, received technical and financial assistance from the National Park Service and Massachusetts Historical Commission. We commend the Association as a small organization set on achieving something big, then doing it.

RIVERFOLK

When the Blackstone River Theatre reopened in the newly renovated Masonic Hall in Cumberland, RI, it found a home for its non-profit cultural arts center where the music, dance and folk arts traditions



“TO A DEVELOPER, THE ASHTON MILL JUMPED OUT AS A BEAUTIFUL PLACE TO RESTORE INTO RESIDENTIAL LIVING SPACES. IT IS DIRECTLY ON THE BLACKSTONE RIVER, IT IS CLOSE TO A MAJOR COMMERCIAL AREA AND IT IS RIGHT OFF OF THE HIGHWAY. FURTHER, IT IS ON THE BIKEWAY AND NEAR THE BEAUTIFULLY RENOVATED ASHTON VIADUCT.”

RICHARD GRAF, INVESTMENTS, INC.

ALONG THE RIVERWAY

In Rhode Island, Governor Almond cut the ribbon for the bikeway bridge connecting Ashton to Quinnville to complete seven miles of continuous



Great progress was made with the design of several river landings this year. The Central Falls Landing was completed and will serve as the mooring site for the Samuel Slater Canal Boat and the Explorer tour boat. Plans are being finalized for the Woonsocket Landing in Market Square. Other landings under design include the Manville Landing above the dam, the Pawtucket Landing behind Slater Mill and the Lincoln Landing at the Blackstone River State Park. These sites, in addition to the sites in Massachusetts, are part of a system that will provide improved public access to the river.

trail. The entire Rhode Island section is expected to be completed by 2006. The Millbury/Worcester segment in Massachusetts is scheduled to open in Spring 2003 and a Bikeway Task Force was formed by MA Highway and the Commission to develop a strategy to gain



public input and continue progress. Expect to see the design plans this spring for the Millville/ Uxbridge segment.

The Commission is partnering with the RI Department of Transportation and the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council to develop a series of river landing sites.

of the Blackstone Valley could come to life. This year 76 events were held including 15 participatory folk dances (Irish ceilis, French Canadian quadrilles and Cajun dances), 10 children's programs, and 47 music concerts. A volunteer training program logged over 2,500 volunteer hours and, as part of their Heritage Arts Studio initiative, the Theatre



offered classes and workshops in Irish step and ceili dance, traditional knitting, stone carving and stained glass. To date, the Theatre has entertained over 16,000 theatergoers with over 190 events.

THE BLACKSTONE CANAL & TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM

Along the Blackstone Canal in Lincoln, RI, next to the Kelly House is the center of a landscape providing clues to a changing way of life. Inside the Kelly House a new museum depicts the area's transportation evolution. Beginning with the construction of the Blackstone Canal, it shows the impacts of the railroads and automobiles (including construction of the massive Ashton Viaduct). The Blackstone Bikeway through the park represents the latest stage.



Milestones



IN EARLY APRIL, CONGRESSMAN RICHARD NEAL SPENT A DAY MEETING WITH CORRIDOR PARTNERS AND VISITING SITES AROUND THE BLACKSTONE VALLEY.

WATERS FARM HOUSE RESTORED

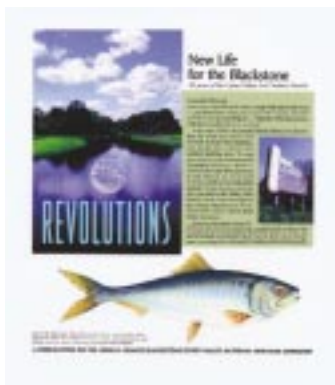
Thanks to the hard work of the National Park Service Building Conservation Branch and the Waters Farm Association members the farm house was stabilized and will soon be open for visitors. An addition to the Farm this year is the Carriage Barn that now houses the Farm's collection of antique horse-drawn buggies and equipment. The Association has also been hard at work finishing a Master Plan that will guide future development, preservation and interpretation of this scenic hilltop farm.



"This is a national story (the Blackstone Valley). Here, you need only to open your door and look around to see how our Nation's industrial legacy began."
- Congressman Richard Neal

REVOLUTIONS 2002

The Commission continued to reach communities with full color inserts in *The River Valley Current*, a monthly publication distributed free in libraries, retail establishments,



restaurants and tourism information kiosks throughout the region. Topics included: the Blackstone Canal; teaching science in the Blackstone River watershed; how 30 years of the Clean Water Act have produced results for life in and out of the river; the Greenway Challenge; and meeting houses in the Blackstone Valley.

PADDLE CLUB GROWS WITH THE FLOW

A third successful year of the Tuesday night Paddle Club found growing numbers of participants on the rivers, ponds, and reservoirs throughout the Valley. The establishment of volunteer "Team Leaders," the ongoing partnership with the Rhode Island Canoe and Kayak Association, and the livery service of Great Canadian kept things running smoothly.



AND ONE FOR ALL... TOURISM

When it comes to promoting the Blackstone Valley, the bi-state Tourism Marketing Campaign shows we're better, together. The Blackstone Valley Tourism Council in Rhode Island and the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce Tourism Committee in Massachusetts promote the Valley as a single destination to travel associations and tour businesses across the country. The campaign includes signage for heritage sites, a common rack card, web site and 1-800 information number. Seasonal media kits were developed and distributed to travel writers offering opportunities to explore "New England's Historic National Park Area."



Happy Trails to Ranger Dan

National Park Service Ranger Dan Meharg arrived at the Corridor four years ago. The Corridor's involvement in all things "environmental" is stronger due to his creativity, enthusiasm and ability to build partnerships. We will miss his contributions and unique perspective.



IT TAKES VOLUNTEERS

Sporting their new uniforms, over 150 incredible people stepped forward to give of their time and energy as Volunteers in Parks – or as we prefer to call them, VIPs. Their work is crucial in helping people of all ages discover the wonders of the River Valley, and helping carry out Corridor activities in many, many ways. VIPs logged an impressive 19,853 hours this year. Thanks to all our VIPs for all they give throughout the year!



"ALONG THE BLACKSTONE" NETWORK TO FREEDOM

Ranger Chuck Arning received the National Park Service Freedom Star Award for three episodes of the video series *Along the Blackstone* focused on the people and places of the Valley's Underground Railroad. The shows recreate the journeys of fugitive slaves seeking freedom through the Blackstone Valley. The work could not have been accomplished without the contributions of volunteers from Waters Farm in Sutton, National Park Service Rangers from the Boston African-American National Historic Site, and the St. James Baptist Church Senior Choir.

FISCAL YEAR 2002 APPROPRIATIONS

The Commission is supported by a Federal Congressional appropriation which has leveraged substantial local, state and private funds to pursue a wide range of projects that benefit the National Heritage Corridor.

Commission Operations

\$ 800,000

Congressional Appropriations to support Commission operations for administration and project development.

National Park Service Technical Assistance

\$ 306,000

Appropriations through the Operations of the National Park Service to provide technical specialists in historic preservation, planning and design, environment and National Park Rangers for interpretation.

Development Funds

\$1,000,000

Congressional line-item appropriation to provide funding to implement the following preservation and development strategies outlined in the Commission Plan and legislation.

Ongoing Development Projects

Tourism Marketing and Products for Public Outreach	40,000
Educational Ranger Programs	35,000
Corridor Communications Program	80,000
Hot Spot Planning	25,000

Strategic Development Programs

Chestnut Hill Meeting House Historic Structures Research	22,000
MA Audubon Watershed Education Program	5,000
Towtaid Park Planning and Signage	10,000
Urban Environmental Design Manual	50,000
Sutton 300 Celebration – A Cultural Celebration	25,000
Threads Across the Atlantic Exhibit at Slater Mill VC	15,000
Woonsocket Riverfront Revitalization Plan	25,000
Millbury Downtown Streetscape Improvements	18,500
EN Jenckes Store Archival Research and Preservation	18,000
Hearthside Historic Building Research	4,000
Blackstone River High School Studies Program	5,000
Corridor-wide Cultural Cluster Events	4,500
Pascoag Riverwalk Plan and Signage	29,570

Community Projects

Northern Gateway Visitor Center Exhibits	100,000
Middle River Park & River Access Plan	5,000
Willard House & Clock Museum Master Plan	20,000
Central Falls Landing Docking Facilities	100,000
Whitin Park Amphitheatre Development	10,000
Museum of Work & Culture Capital Campaign	12,000
Tourism Marketing Strategic Plan Implementation	30,000
Zap River Projects – River Clean-up and Protection	40,000
River Restoration Network Implementation	15,000
Streambank Stabilization and Restoration	10,000
Blackstone Valley Institute Programming	52,500

Join the Corridor Coalition!

The Corridor Coalition is a friends group dedicated to the continued preservation of the Blackstone Valley's significance as the birthplace of The American Industrial Revolution. Here's how you can help as a member of the Coalition: advocate for the continuation of the Corridor Commission beyond the present sunset date 2006; participate and help with events for the Commission; help to raise non-federal funds for Corridor projects; and provide opportunities for volunteers to participate in Corridor outreach and programming.

To learn more about the Corridor Coalition and for membership information, visit our website www.corridorcoalition.org or call Sue Barker at 401-423-2623.

Coming in 2003...

The 400th birthday of Roger Williams, the founder of Rhode Island and a champion of the ideal of religious freedom, will be celebrated throughout the summer. Check out the website at Roger Williams National Memorial for details: www.nps.gov/rowi.

The 175th Anniversary of the opening of the Blackstone Canal is this year. **The 30th Anniversary of ZAP** takes place 6/21/03 at the Blackstone River State Park in Lincoln, RI. To find out more, call Tammy Gilpatrick at the Blackstone Watershed Council at 401-724-2200 or go to www.nps.gov/blac/zap.

Get your team together for **Greenway Challenge 2003!** We look forward to our third Greenway Challenge where participants run, bike and paddle the length of the Blackstone River on 9/27/03.

CHECK OUT OUR NEW WEBSITE WWW.NPS.GOV/BLAC/HOME.HTM

2002 John H. Chafee Heritage Award Recipients

The fourth annual John H. Chafee Heritage Award is given to individuals who embody the late Senator John Chafee's commitment to preserving the Valley's heritage and revitalizing its communities and waterways.



Gary Vaillancourt

Gary Vaillancourt and "tourism" are synonymous. Having founded and served as the Chairman of the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce's Tourism Committee, Gary has been involved in regional tourism efforts for over ten years. Among one of the many ideas that Gary has been able to make happen in a big way is "Christmas in Historic Sutton" as part of the annual "Holiday Chain of Lights" festival which has become the holiday event to enjoy. Vaillancourt Folk Art was also one of the first Blackstone Valley Hospitality Centers. Gary's commitment to tourism and a way of expanding visitation to our historic sites and businesses, is best stated by his mantra: "Just direct people to one other site in the Valley."



Deborah Cary

Deb Cary, the Director of the Massachusetts Audubon Broad Meadow Brook Conservation Center and Wildlife Sanctuary in Worcester, epitomizes the meaning of public service. Deb is a true leader within the environmental community and an energetic visionary who motivates people and makes things happen.

Deb was in the forefront of those promoting the inclusion of Worcester in the Corridor and for the Corridor Commission's extension in the 1990s. Her participation in the Valley, including her engagement in such activities as the Northern Gateway Task Force, the Greater Worcester Land Trust, the Blackstone Canal Task Force, and many others, illustrates her enduring commitment to preservation work and community development.



Richard Gregory

For the past several years, as the President of the Old Slater Mill Assoc., Dick has been engaged in "Reinventing the Mill." Serving as the anchor to the Blackstone Valley's industrial heritage story, Slater Mill Historic Site is about to offer revitalized programming that includes Living History, incorporating a social context. This transformation is taking shape under Dick Gregory's leadership and with his "can-do" attitude.



Michael Quirk

Michael, a senior at Nipmuc Regional High School spent exhaustive hours working at the Chestnut Hill Meeting House cemetery this summer where gravestones required protection from the deterioration caused by years of New England weather. Michael worked alongside a preservation consultant to learn the appropriate restoration techniques. His Eagle Scout Project work enabled the Association to receive preservation work for an additional 45 gravestones and he compiled information about each stone restored in an Inventory/Conservation record that provides historical documentation.



Jennifer Cote

As President of Woonsocket High School's River Club for the past two years, Jennifer has been a proven leader in environmental education activities. She produced a Blackstone Valley Coloring Book, urged the adoption of the Indian Rock Nature Trail at the Leo Savoie Elementary School, and coordinated coat drives for the New Coat for Anna program as well as participated in Big Night activities at the High School.

John H. Chafee

BLACKSTONE RIVER VALLEY

National Heritage Corridor Commission



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